



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/941,680	08/30/2001	Koubun Suzuki	212557US-2	9223
22850	7590	07/03/2006	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			BRUCKART, BENJAMIN R	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2155	

DATE MAILED: 07/03/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 09/941,680	Applicant(s) SUZUKI ET AL.	
	Examiner Benjamin R. Bruckart	Art Unit 2155	

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --**

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 June 2006.  
 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.  
 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41, 43-100 and 102-109 is/are pending in the application.  
     4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41, 43-100, 102-109 is/are rejected.  
 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
     Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
     Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
     a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:  
         1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
         2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
         3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)             | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)    | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____  |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____   | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                    |

### **Detailed Action**

Claims 1-41, 43-100, 102-109 are pending in this Office Action.

Claims 43 and 101 remain cancelled.

Claims 1-3, 6, 11-13, 16, 25-26, 30, 34-36, 43-44, 46, 50-58, 67-70, 73, 78-83, 92-96, 102-103, and 109 are amended.

The claim objection on claim 25 is withdrawn in view of the amendment.

### **Response to Arguments**

Applicant's arguments filed 6/1/06 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

### ***Specification***

The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: Claims recite limitations directed to “configured to select based on corresponding service information a set of at least two apparatuses that require service” without the words ‘select’ ‘configured to select’ or ‘two or more’ anywhere in the specification. Further the specification is written broadly to receive and analyze status information. Applicant’s use of the term ‘service information’ is not explicitly stated in the specification.

*Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112*

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-41, 43-100, 102-109 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter, which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Claims recite limitations directed to “configured to select based on corresponding service information a set of at least two apparatuses that require service” without the words ‘select’ ‘configured to select’ or ‘two or more’ anywhere in the specification. Further the specification is written broadly to receive and analyze status information. Applicant’s use of the term ‘service information’ is not explicitly stated in the specification.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter, which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-41, 43-100, 102-109 recite the limitations “configured to select based on corresponding service information a set of at least two apparatuses that require service” without the words ‘select’ ‘configured to select’ or ‘two or more’ anywhere in the specification. Further the specification is written broadly to receive and analyze status information. Applicant’s use of the term ‘service information’ is not explicitly stated in the specification." There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

**Claims 1-41, 43-100, 102-109 are rejected under 102(e) as being unpatentable by U.S. Patent No. 6,141,507 by Sawada in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,430,711 by Sekizawa.**

Regarding claim 1, the Sawada reference teaches a remote control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups including at least an image forming apparatus (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; claim 1), comprising:

a central control system comprising at least a computer unit configured to receive service information from said at least an image forming apparatus and remotely control said plurality of apparatuses based on said service information (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; col. 6, lines 1-55);

an information collection unit configured to collect corresponding service information from other image forming apparatuses included in a same group as said at least an image forming apparatus (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; col. 6, lines 1-55) when said service information of said at least an image forming apparatus is received by said central control system (Sawada: col. 3, lines 1-11); and

said computer unit is configured to select based on said corresponding service information a set of at least two apparatuses from said plurality of apparatuses that require service as said at least an image forming apparatus (Sawada: col. 13, lines 32- col. 14, line 13).

Regarding claim 2, the remote control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

an information processing unit configured to process said corresponding service information which is acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and is collected by said information collection unit (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22); and

an information transmission unit configured to connect to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said information processing unit (Sawada: col. 5, lines 23-39).

Regarding claim 3, the remote control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

an information setting unit configured to set said service information in advance of collecting said corresponding service information, for which said collection by said information collection unit is allowed (Sawada: col. 4, lines 33-36).

Regarding claim 4, the remote control system according to claim 1, wherein said information collected, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said information collection unit is related to pre-maintenance (Sawada: col. 4, lines 30-48).

Regarding claim 5, the remote control system according to claim 1, wherein said information collected, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said information collection unit is related to expendable supplies and material (Sawada: col. 4, lines 30-45).

Regarding claim 6, the remote control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a group setting unit configured to set a group in advance of collecting said status information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into said predetermined number of groups (Sawada: col. 16, lines 34-40).

Regarding claim 7, the remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising: an information alteration and addition unit configured to perform alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing unit (Sawada: col. 5, lines 28-45; col. 6, lines 42-55).

Regarding claim 8, the remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising: an information destination setting unit configured to set a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission unit (Sawada: col. 15, lines 58-64; col. 5, lines 33-39).

Regarding claim 9, the remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising: an information outputting unit configured to output said information processed by said information

processing unit through at least one of an image formation on a display device, data recording on a paper sheet, or an audible voice (Sawada: col. 5, lines 15-26).

Regarding claim 10, the remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising: an information transmitting unit configured to transmit said information processed by said information processing unit when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any terminal unit of the terminal units (Sawada: col. 5, lines 33-39).

Regarding claim 11, a remote control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups including at least an image forming apparatus (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; claim 1), comprising:

a central control system comprising at least a computer unit configured to receive service information from said at least one image forming apparatus and remotely control said plurality of apparatuses based on said service information of at least an image forming apparatus (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; col. 6, lines 1-55; claim 1);

an information accumulation unit configured to accumulate corresponding service information when said service information is received by said central control system from said at least an image forming apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; col. 6, lines 1-55);

an information retrieval unit configured to retrieve said corresponding service from other image forming apparatuses included in a same group as said at least an image forming apparatus (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22) when said service information of said at least an image forming apparatus is received by said central control system (Sawada: col. 3, lines 1-11); and

said computer unit is configured to select based on said corresponding service information a set of at least two apparatuses from said plurality of apparatuses that require service as said at least an image forming apparatus (Sawada: col. 13, lines 32- col. 14, line 13).

Regarding claim 12, the remote control system according to claim 11, further comprising:

an information processing unit configured to process said corresponding service information which is acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and is retrieved by said information retrieval unit (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22); and

an information transmission unit configured to connect to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said information processing unit (Sawada: col. 5, lines 23-39).

Regarding claim 13, the remote control system according to claim 11, further comprising: an information setting unit configured to set said apparatus information in advance of retrieving corresponding service status information, for which said retrieval by said information retrieval unit is allowed (Sawada: col. 4, lines 33-36).

Regarding claim 14, the remote control system according to claim 11, wherein said information which is acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and being retrieved by said information retrieval unit is related to pre-maintenance (Sawada: col. 4, lines 30-48).

Regarding claim 15, the remote control system according to claim 11, wherein said information accumulated, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said information accumulation unit is related to expendable supplies and material (Sawada: col. 4, lines 30-45).

Regarding claim 16, the remote control system according to claim 11, further comprising: a group setting unit configured to set a group in advance of retrieving said corresponding service information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into said predetermined number of groups (Sawada: col. 16, lines 34-40).

Regarding claim 17, the remote control system according to claim 16, further comprising: a plurality of communication adapters connected to said plurality of image forming apparatuses for communicating with said central control system, wherein said group setting unit divides said



plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to said communication adapters (Sawada: col. 16, lines 34-40).

Regarding claim 18, the remote control system according to claim 16, further comprising: a plurality of communication adapters connected to said plurality of image forming apparatuses for communicating with said central control system, wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to a predetermined number of said respective communication adapters (Sawada: col. 16, lines 34-40).

Regarding claim 19, the remote control system according to claim 16, wherein said plurality of image forming apparatuses are interconnected by way of communication networks incorporating a network control unit, and wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to an IP address in said network system (Sawada: col. 16, lines 34-40).

Regarding claim 20, the remote control system according to claim 16, wherein said plurality of image forming apparatuses are interconnected by way of communication networks incorporating a network control unit, and wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to a predetermined number of IP addresses in said network system (Sawada: col. 16, lines 34-40).

Regarding claim 21, the remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising: an information alteration and addition unit configured to perform alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing unit (Sawada: col. 5, lines 28-45; col. 6, lines 42-55).

Regarding claim 22, the remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising: an information destination unit configured to set a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission unit (Sawada: col. 15, lines 58-64; col. 5, lines 33-39).

Regarding claim 23, the remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising: an information outputting unit configured to output said information processed by said information processing unit through at least one of an image formation on a display device, data recording on a paper sheet, or an audible voice (Sawada: col. 5, lines 15-26).

Regarding claim 24, the remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising: an information transmitting unit configured to transmit said information processed by said information processing unit when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any terminal unit of the terminal units (Sawada: col. 5, lines 33-39).

Regarding claim 25, a remote control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups including at least an image forming apparatus (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; claim 1), comprising:

- a central control system comprising at least a computer unit configured to receive service information from said at least an image forming apparatus and remotely control said plurality of apparatuses based on said service information (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; col. 6, lines 1-55; claim 1);

- an information collection unit configured to collect corresponding service information from other image forming apparatuses included in a same group as said at least an image forming apparatus when said service information of said at least an image forming apparatus is received by said central control system (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; col. 6, lines 1-55);

- said computer unit is configured to select based on said corresponding service information a set of at least two apparatuses from said plurality of apparatuses that require service as said at least an image forming apparatus (Sawada: col. 13, lines 32- col. 14, line 13);

- a first information processing unit configured to process said corresponding service information (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22);

- a first information transmission unit configured to connect to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and

Art Unit: 2155

subsequently transmitting said corresponding service information processed by said first information processing unit (Sawada: col. 5, lines 23-39; claim 1);

an information accumulation unit configured to accumulate said corresponding service information when said service information is received from said at least an image forming apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; col. 6, lines 1-55);

an information retrieval unit configured to retrieve said corresponding service information from other image forming apparatuses included in a same group as said at least an image forming apparatus (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22) when said service information of said at least an image forming apparatus is received by said central control system (Sawada: col. 3, lines 1-11);

a second information processing unit configured to process said service information received from said at least an image forming apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses and retrieved by said information retrieval unit (Sawada: col. 5, lines 5-22; Fig. 1 units);

a second information transmission unit configured to connect to the terminal units so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said corresponding service information processed by said second information processing unit (Sawada: col. 5, lines 23-39); and

an information decision unit configured to determine whether or not an execution command is sent to any one of said information collection unit, said first information processing unit, said first information transmission unit, said information retrieval unit, said second information processing unit, and said second information transmission unit (Sawada: col. 4, lines 30-44).

Claims 1-41, 43-100, 102-109 are rejected under 103(a) as being unpatentable by U.S. Patent No. 6,141,507 by Sawada in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,430,711 by Sekizawa as containing substantially similar subject matter and amendments as the above described limitations.

### **PRIOR ART**

U.S. Patent No. 6,430,711 by Sekizawa teaches consolidating service needs of devices two or more into electronic messages for delivery to a device for service maintenance.

### **REMARKS**

Applicant has made amendments to the claims directed to 'selecting two more apparatuses require service.' The claim language is outside the language found in the specification. Further the central control unit in Sawada anticipates the amendment because Sawada is monitoring all the devices in its coverage area (col. 5, lines 5-22). Sawada columns 13 and 14 describe receiving alarm information from devices and analyzing them. The devices that reach a threshold are determined to be in need of service whether it be dispatching a serviceman or ordering parts.

### **Conclusion**

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a).

Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Benjamin R. Bruckart whose telephone number is (571) 272-3982. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-5:30PM with every other Friday off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Saleh Najjar can be reached on (571) 272-4006. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Benjamin R Bruckart  
Examiner  
Art Unit 2155  
brb

brb

  
SALEH NAJJAR  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER